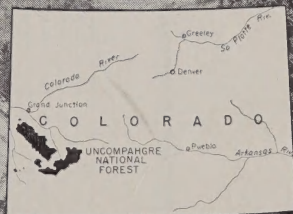
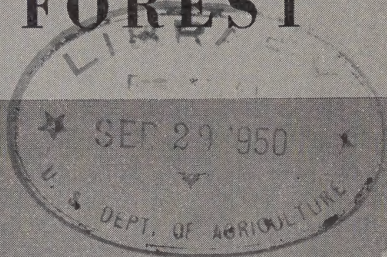


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UNCOMPAHGRE NATIONAL FOREST



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE
Rocky Mountain Region

UNCOMPAHGRE NATIONAL FOREST was established by President Theodore Roosevelt's proclamation of June 14, 1905. The forest's net area is 1,850,000 acres, of which 105,270 acres is owned by the State of Colorado and private interests. It is located in southwest Colorado, on the western slope of the Continental Divide. The northern or Uncompahgre division lies on the crest and slopes of the rolling, mesalike Uncompahgre Plateau, and is drained by the San Miguel, Dolores, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison Rivers. The southern or Ouray division lies on the northern slopes of the San Juan Mountains, a spur range extending north and west from the Continental Divide. This division is drained by the Uncompahgre, Gunnison, and San Miguel Rivers.

A short distance south of the town of Ridgway are hot springs surrounded by a red mineral deposit. The Ute Indians called these springs Uncompahgre, which meant red water springs. Thus, a river, the forest, and the forest's highest peak received their names.

The first white men to explore this region were members of an expedition under the leadership of the Padres Francisco Silvestre Escalante and Antanacio Dominguez. These men, at the head of the Spanish Missions in New Mexico, were urged by their superior to explore a route from Santa Fé to the coast of Upper California. The expedition was begun in the spring of 1776. Taking a northwesterly course from Santa Fé by way of the San Juan and Dolores Rivers, the explorers crossed the Uncompahgre Plateau along the northern base of the rugged San Juan Mountains and camped in Uncompahgre Park (Canada Honda), about 4 miles north of the present town of Ouray, early in 1777. From there explorations were carried on in the deep, rugged canyons of the Escalante and Dominguez Creeks, not far from the present town of Delta.

For 60 years the region was not entered by white men. Then, in 1837, a French trapper named Joseph Roubideau penetrated the country in search of beaver. He established his camp on Roubideau Creek, about 7 miles west of the present town of Delta. From that time until 1873, only an occasional trapper or prospector in search of gold entered this stronghold of the Utes. The discovery of gold in paying quantities that year marked the first permanent settlement in the locality, now the old ghost town of Mineral Point.

In 1873, also, the "San Juan Treaty" was made and the Utes ceded to the United States 4 million acres of their rich domain. In 1880, under another treaty, the Confederate Utes agreed to sell their reservation in Colorado and move to Utah. The following year, remnants of this once powerful tribe started the march to their new reservation in the desert of Utah, far from the famous red-water springs of their forefathers.

It is estimated that there are about $1\frac{3}{4}$ billion feet, board measure, of merchantable timber on this forest, of which about 65 percent is Engel-

mann spruce, 23 percent ponderosa pine, 9 percent corkbark fir, and the rest white and Douglas-fir. Engelmann spruce and corkbark fir are valuable pulpwood species. Possibilities of developing a market for aspen from the forest are encouraging. This species is well adapted to the manufacture of matches, boxes, crates, and other containers. Butter, cheese, eggs, and other products that quickly absorb the odor of the material in which they are packed may be shipped with safety in aspen-wood containers.

Timber management plans are prepared to include all of the stands on the forest. These plans provide for the harvesting of the timber only as rapidly as it will be replaced by new growth. Trained forest officers select and mark for cutting only mature, diseased, defective, dying, and insect-infested trees. Healthy trees ranging in size from saplings to large, immature trees are left. Thus trees that are suppressed because of lack of moisture and sunlight are released, make more rapid growth, and yield a better product when planned cutting is done. By adhering to this cutting policy, timber may be harvested perpetually in cycles varying from 40 to 80 years.

Logging operations have been confined largely to the ponderosa pine and spruce stands on the Uncompahgre Plateau, lumber being the major product manufactured. After the extensive blow-down of 1939, the Engelmann spruce beetle entered the area in epidemic numbers, and has caused tremendous loss. In recent years, operations have been confined largely to salvage of this dead timber—some 20 million board feet have already been logged. Sawmills manufacture it into lumber on top of the Uncompahgre Plateau, and its main use has been local. The output is of prime importance to the agricultural economy of the surrounding country.

Well-managed watersheds, for the protection and maintenance of beneficial water yields, is one of the major functions of all national forests. The significance of this function may be grasped from the following: Some 250,000 acres of irrigated land, supporting directly and indirectly approximately 35,000 people, are almost entirely dependent on water from the Uncompahgre National Forest. The forest is also a source of water for domestic water for 10,000 people in 1 town and 7 small communities; Lake Mead, on the lower Colorado, whose water is used for domestic and other purposes; 10 plants, or operations, including mining; 96 stock-water ponds; 15 natural and artificial lakes equal to an area of 1,000 acres; and 500 miles of fishing streams.

The Forest Service is trying to protect and maintain this precious resource by obtaining better management of livestock through restricted and controlled grazing, conservative cutting and logging, care in building and maintaining roads and trails, and by rebuilding soil on eroded areas.

In 1948 this forest furnished range for more than 22,500 cattle and 54,600 sheep, owned by 239 permittees. About 788,000 acres are suited to grazing; the remainder is too heavily timbered or is too rocky and steep for use by livestock. Cattle prefer untimbered, rolling country; thus, most of the cattle on the forest graze the northern or Uncompahgre division. The southern or Ouray division is mountainous. It is devoted largely to sheep grazing, and the succulent forage on timber line slopes and meadows produces fat lambs.

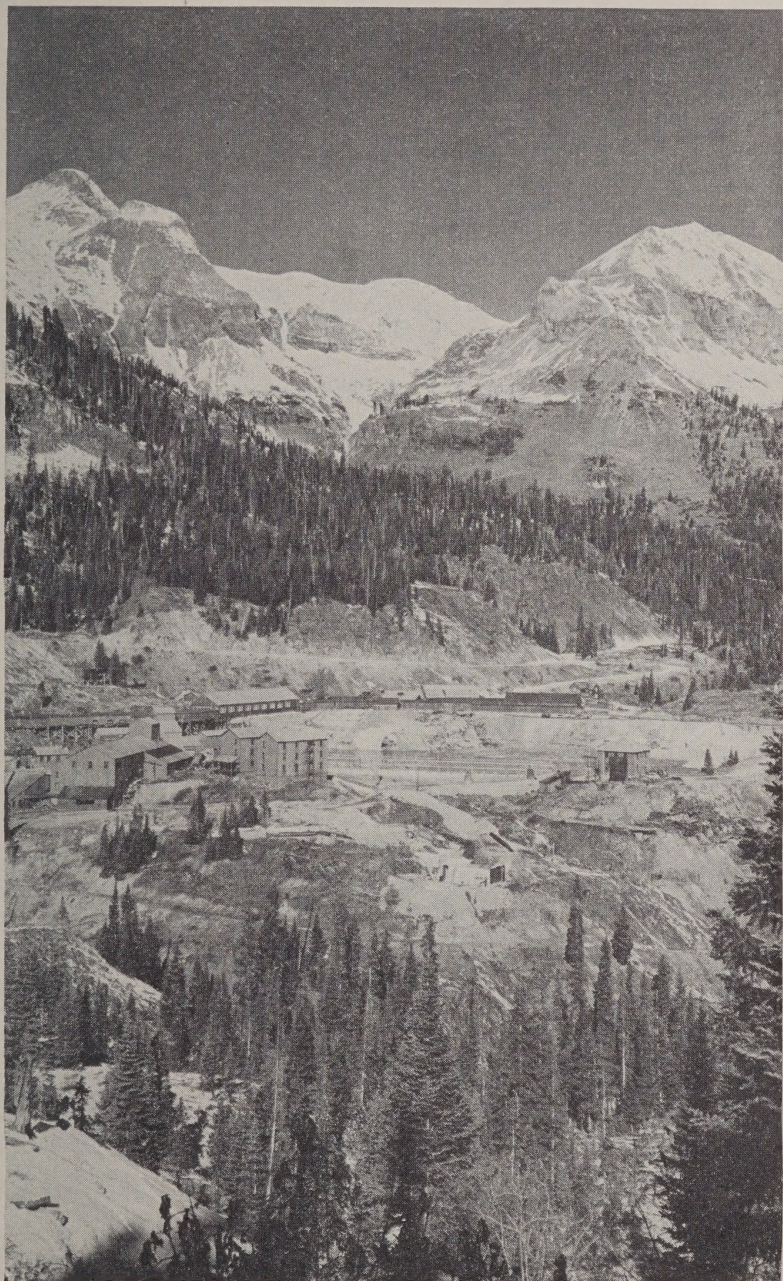
Several thousands of acres of range that have been badly injured by overgrazing are being reseeded to grass to improve their value for range and watershed purposes. Most of the range land, which is not suitable for reseeding, must be restored by careful management. This includes fencing to control livestock; developing springs and reservoirs to permit more use of range now insufficiently watered; and reducing the use by livestock and game where present use is so great that desirable native forage plants are unable to maintain themselves in satisfactory stands. About 300,000 acres of range on the forest need this special attention to improve their watershed and grazing values. Good range management must come through teamwork between stockmen and the rangers.

The mining of metallic ores has been an industry of importance within this forest since about 1875. Just prior to the beginning of the present century, the mining camps of Lake City and Ouray boasted populations of several thousand and were two of the more famous and colorful camps of the region. Of less importance, but equally as colorful, were Sherman, Capitol City, and Mineral Point, all of which are now ghost towns.

In the vicinity of Lake City, Sherman, and Capitol City, the production of gold was of secondary importance, the principal metals extracted being silver, copper, lead, and zinc. The most famous mine in this region was the Ute-Ulay, while the Golden Fleece and Hidden Treasure have also produced much ore of high value. The famous Camp Bird Mine near Ouray has poured out a treasure in gold and silver valued at millions of dollars, and is one of the mines that is still being worked.

Much of the rich mining country in Ouray County lies within this forest. From 1878 to 1945 precious and base metals were produced that had a value of \$87,069,161. Of the total production, about 46 percent was gold, 40 percent silver, 9 percent lead, 4 percent copper, and less than 1 percent zinc.

In Hinsdale County the principal mines have been in the vicinity of Lake City and Capitol City, and here, as in Ouray County, many of the important producers have been located within the boundaries of the forest. Production in this county from 1875 to 1945, inclusive, was valued at \$10,795,065. Here, silver has been first in value with 43 percent, followed by lead with 29 percent, 13 percent gold, 7 percent copper, and less than 1 percent zinc.



F-442179

Treasury Mine. Since early times, mining has been an industry of importance within the Uncompahgre.

Large deposits of vanadium ore have been found adjacent to the forest boundaries along the San Miguel and Dolores Rivers, and large fields of bituminous and anthracite coal are located on or adjacent to the forest. Mineral resources within the forest are open to development under the same laws that govern mining on unreserved public lands.

Favored spots for fishing are the Lake Fork of the Gunnison, Big Blue Creek, the Big and Little Cimarron, the East and West Dallas Creeks, and Crystal Lake. These streams are stocked periodically with eastern brook and rainbow trout from both State and Federal hatcheries, with the cooperation of the Forest Service, interested individuals, and civic organizations.

Seven elk were planted in the amphitheater at Ouray in 1922, and 6 years later 18 were liberated on the Uncompahgre Plateau. Both herds increased rapidly because of natural ranges and a closed season



F-442165

A familiar scene at a big game hunting camp during the hunting season.

and there are now about 500 elk. Hunting to maintain proper numbers is permitted.

Recent estimates indicate that there are approximately 200 mountain sheep, 10,000 mule deer, and 800 black or brown bears within this forest. Fox, marten, mink, weasel, and badgers are not uncommon. There are also mountain lions, Canada lynx, and bobcats.

It was the lure of the beaver pelt which first brought the trapper into this region. For a time these animals were so vigorously hunted that they became almost extinct. During later years, however, observance of the law prohibiting their trapping and killing—except for the protection of crops and improvements—has resulted in their very rapid increase. Today, nearly every stream in the Uncompahgre has its quota of these industrious animals. Their numerous dams afford excellent fishing, provide water areas of great benefit as fish-rearing ponds, and aid in conserving water for irrigation purposes and for range stock during dry seasons.

The Uncompahgre National Forest is a playground for people living nearby, and also for visitors from afar. For 82 miles the Divide Road, which traverses the length of the Uncompahgre Plateau, winds through large, grassy parks and beautiful stands of spruce, pine, or aspen timber at elevations varying from 8,500 to 9,500 feet above sea level. At various points along the route, there are unusual views of Grand Mesa, the Uncompahgre and the San Miguel River Valleys, the Paradox drainages, and the rugged La Sal, Blue, and Henry Mountains in Utah.

The locality about the town of Ouray has justly been called the "Switzerland of America," because of the ruggedness and beauty of its mountains and canyons. Snow-capped peaks tower from 5,000 to 6,000 feet; their sides are scarred and seamed with overhanging granite cliffs and talus slopes. Tumbling streams, fed by banks of perpetual snow, culminate in beautiful waterfalls; and the green forests which clothe the lower slopes of the mountains bear the scars of snowslides.

To meet the recreation needs of the public and to lessen the risk of disastrous forest fires, numerous convenient, well-equipped camp grounds have been developed at accessible and attractive points. These camp grounds are in perfect harmony with their surroundings and have developed water supplies, campfire grates, tables, toilets, facilities for garbage disposal, and are fenced against livestock. No charge is made for their use.

Modest tourist resorts are located in or near the forest along the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River, at Lake City and Lake San Cristobal, and in the vicinity of Ridgway and Ouray. Excellent hotel accommodations are available at Ouray, Montrose, Delta, and Grand Junction.

On the headwaters of the Cimarron River is found the most primitive section of the forest, and one that offers the highest wilderness recrea-



F-30179A

Trail to High Mesa—wilderness recreation.

tion values—the Uncompahgre Wild Area. As a whole, this is as rugged country as will be found anywhere. Sheer granite cliffs hundreds of feet high are quite common. The whole locality is one of high, jagged, steep mountain peaks; deep, precipitous, rugged, and variegated canyons; beautiful, high waterfalls; lakes set in austere backgrounds; and extensive timber areas.

This rugged area offers unexcelled opportunities for the enjoyment of wilderness travel. The trail system gives accessibility by foot or horse but leaves large areas untouched for those who wish to strike out for themselves or do some real mountain climbing. Travelers in this rough country should be properly equipped and experienced, particularly for off-the-trail travel.

From the Uncompahgre River Valley may be seen, in order from east to west, this unequalled array of peaks—either entirely within or close by, the wild area: Uncompahgre, 14,286 feet above sea level; Matterhorn, 13,589; Wetterhorn, 14,017; Coxcomb, 13,660; Wildhorse, 13,268; Courthouse, 12,165; Chimney, 11,786; Whitehouse, 13,493; Potosi, 13,790; Sneffels, 14,143; Dallas, 13,800; Mears, 13,488; Hayden, 12,990; and North Pole, 12,197. The lowest points on the area are over 9,700 feet in elevation.

Among the most interesting roads on or adjacent to the forest are the Divide Road, the Iola-Lake City Road, and the world-famous Durango-Red Mountain Highway, better known as "The Million Dollar Highway," which extends across the Ouray division from Ouray to Durango, via the famous mining town of Silverton. Numerous old mining roads and trails lead to practically all parts of the forest. The "circle trip," on horseback from Ouray to American Flats over the Horsethief and Bear Creek Trails, is one of the most spectacular trips of its kind in the United States.

The Forest Supervisor and Forest Rangers ask your help in preventing fires. They will be glad to help you use and enjoy this forest. Get acquainted with them. They are good men to know. You will find the Forest Supervisor at Delta, Colo.; and District Rangers at White-water, Delta, Montrose, Ouray, Lake City, and Norwood, Colo.

Forest Health Rules

1. ***Purification.***—Mountain streams will not purify themselves in a few hundred feet. Boil or chlorinate all suspected water.

2. ***Garbage.***—Burn all paper, old clothing, or rubbish. Bury or place in pits or receptacles provided, all garbage, tin cans, bottles, and other refuse.

3. ***Washing.***—Do not wash soiled clothing or utensils, or bathe in springs, streams, or lakes. Use a container and throw dirty water where it cannot get into the water supply without first filtering through the ground.

4. ***Sanitary precautions.***—Use public toilets if they are available. Where not provided, bury 1 foot deep all human excrement, at least 200 feet from water.

5. ***Obey laws.***—Observe the rules of sanitation and protect yourself and others. Report all insanitary conditions to the nearest health or forest officer.



F-356581

Bear Creek Falls, 3 miles south of Ouray.



F-430942

Forage is an important resource of the Uncompahgre. About 55,000 sheep graze here annually.



F-430943

Good roads make travel in this scenic forest a pleasure.

What To Do When Lost

The Forest Service suggests the following simple and common-sense rules to be remembered when lost in the woods:

1. Stop. Sit down and try to figure out where you are. Use your head and not your legs.
2. If caught by night, fog, or storm, stop at once and make camp in a sheltered place. Build a fire in a safe spot. Gather plenty of dry fuel as soon as possible after selecting a camping place.
3. Do not wander about. Travel only downhill.
4. If you are injured, choose a clear spot, on a promontory or hill if possible, and build a signal smoke.
5. Do not yell; do not run; do not worry; and above all do not quit.
6. The S O S call of the wilderness is three signals of any kind, either audible or visible—three whistles, three flashes from a light, etc. The answer to a distress signal is two audible or visible signals.

Fire Prevention Rules

1. **MATCHES.**—Be sure your *match* is *out*. Break it in two before you throw it away.
2. **SMOKING.**—Be sure that pipe ashes and cigar or cigarette stubs are *dead* before throwing them away. Never throw them into brush, leaves, or needles. When in the woods smoke only in places of habitation, at improved camp grounds, or at carefully selected rest and camp sites—never while *traveling*.
3. **MAKING CAMP.**—Use fire grates at improved camp grounds and observe the rules for building and extinguishing fires. Before building a campfire at places where no grates are available, scrape away all flammable material from a place about 4 feet in diameter. Keep your fire *small*. Never build it against trees or logs, or near brush.
4. **BREAKING CAMP.**—Never break camp until your fire is out, *dead* out. Stir the coals while soaking them with water, turn burned sticks and drench both sides. Wet the ground around the fire and be sure the last spark is dead.
5. **BONFIRES.**—Never build bonfires or burn slash or brush in *windy* weather or while there is the slightest danger that the fire will get away.